

Unanticipated Consequences of interactive marketing: systematic literature review and directions for future research

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Abstract. Internet and social media have created new opportunities and challenges for marketing practices. This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the unanticipated consequences of interactive marketing. The current study focuses on a number of aspects of interactive marketing research such as consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-company communications, consumer brand engagement, impact of social influencers and online buzz, impact of online advertisement, companies adoption and use of new technologies by companies, consumer empowerment by digital technologies, complain handling, impact of mobile advertising, co-creation, and impact of social media marketing. This research provides a valuable synthesis of the relevant literature. The findings of this study could be used as an informative framework for both academics and practitioners.

Keywords: interactive marketing, unanticipated consequences, literature review

1 Introduction

Internet and social media have created new opportunities and challenges for marketing practices. It was expected that new tools would enable “very powerful, very inexpensive, and very intrusive direct marketing” (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009). The predictions were right to some degree. However, they had some consequences which marketers did not expect (Bóveda-Lambie and Hair, 2012; Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). The surprise was, that instead of empowering only companies, new technologies empowered consumers.

Thanks to the new technologies consumers received peer-to-peer tools such as eBay, Youtube, Facebook, blogs and information search tools (e.g. Google and Wikipedia). Mobile platforms provided consumers with connectivity, context-aware

search, and the ability to tag and annotate physical spaces with digital information that could be retrieved and used by other consumers later.

The technologies allowed consumers to engage with brands directly. Customer engagement has been linked to various brand performance indicators such as sales growth, customer involvement in product development, customer feedback and referrals (Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2007). Social media allows customers to review, comment, create and share content across numerous online networks. Customers got direct access to companies, brands, and marketers thanks to social media. This brings both, challenges and opportunities to marketers. Nowadays, companies have to engage with customers in real-time and manage a high amount of customer data.

A number of studies conducted a comprehensive literature review on digital/social media studies (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Leung et al., 2013) and the consequences of new technologies (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009). For example, Lamberton and Stephen (2016) conducted a thematic analysis of the research on digital, social media and mobile marketing (DSMM) published from 2000 to 2015. The main themes which emerged were DSMM as a facilitator of individual expression, DSMM as a decision support tool and DSMM as a market intelligence source. However, these studies became outdated or did not focus on the consequences of new technologies for both, marketers and consumers. Thus, the aim of this paper is to provide a review of studies that focused on the unanticipated consequences of the new technologies for both, companies and consumers. The findings of this study can provide an informative framework for research on the consequences of new technologies for academics and practitioners

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 offers a brief overview of the methods used to identify relevant studies to be included in this review. The next section synthesises the studies identified in the previous section and provides a detailed overview. Section 4 outlines the limitations of current studies and presents direction for further research. Finally, section 5 discusses the key aspects of the research, outlining the limitations of the current paper.

2 Literature search method

This study used cited reference search for Deighton and Kornfeld's (2009) articles on Scopus database to identify studies for the literature review. The search returned 152 articles.

3 Literature synthesis

The studies which focused on unanticipated consequences of interactive marketing were divided into the following themes: consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-company communications, consumer brand engagement, impact of social influencers and online buzz, impact of online advertisement, companies adoption and use of new technologies by companies, consumer empowerment by digital technologies, com-

plain handling, impact of mobile advertising, co-creation, and impact of social media marketing.

3.1 Consumer-to-consumer and consumer to company communication

Some studies focused on consumer-to-consumer and company to consumers communications, by looking at consumers' motivations to engage in this type of communications and examining its positive/negative effect (Gheorghe et al., 2018; Song et al., 2016). Song et al. (2016) studied the interaction effects of consumers' endorsements on marketer-generated content and user-generated content posts in the social media brand community of a popular Asian fashion retailer. Particularly, the study focused on UGC, consumer endorsement passive endorsements (likes) and active endorsements (commenting on a post). It was found that active endorsements positively moderate the effects of marketer-generated content in inducing consumers' expenditure. Nevertheless, it was found that passive endorsements negatively moderated marketer-generated content. It made it less effective in inducing expenditure. However, for UGC the results were the opposite. Additionally, the study found that active endorsements via social-tagging on brand fans lead to more spending (the recipients of social-tags spent 6 dollars more than non-recipients in this week).

3.2. Consumer-to-consumer and consumer to company communication

Some studies focused on consumer engagement with the company/brand (Harrigan et al., 2018; Scarpi, 2010; Rohm et al., 2013). Nowadays customers voluntarily and intentionally engage in online relationships with brands via social media. Consumer brand engagement refers to consumer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity around specific consumer/brand interaction (Brodie et al., 2013).

Scarpi (2010) investigated the impact of the size of brand communities on consumer behavior towards the brand and company. By using the data from a survey the findings show that small communities operate differently from larger ones with regard to numerous aspects and possible strengths and weaknesses. It was found that members of small communities develop higher community loyalty, brand loyalty in small communities stems more from community loyalty than from brand effect. Small communities engage in word of mouth for the community more than in word of mouth for the brand.

3.3. Impact of social influencers and online buzz

Another group of studies focused on the impact of social influencers and online buzz (Keel et al., 2019; Van Norel et al., 2014). For example, Keel et al. (2019) studied the impact of online buzz on internet Initial Public offerings. It was found that high levels of buzz in the year prior to the offering are associated with higher company valuations at the IPO and for the following two years. The findings suggest that online buzz serves as a costly state falsification signal that is not cheap talk. It acts as a risk reducer for the underwriter and presents qualitative information about the issuer.

Van Norel et al. (2014) examined how celebrity Tweet messages can be used to improve a damaged companies reputation and the way how this messaged should be designed and what celebrities should be used. By using an experiment it was found that celebrities' tweets can repair a positive public opinion about companies. It was found that an intelligent celebrity, who has the best fit with the topic has the best impact.

3.4. Impact of online advertisement

Some studied examined the impact of online advertisements have on consumers and companies (Ahmed et al., 2019; Acquisti and Spiekermann, 2011). Ahmed et al. (2019) investigated the effectiveness of online digital media advertising as a strategic tool for building brand sustainability by looking at the impact of various channels. It was found that the channels of digital media advertising have a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of online digital media which creates brand sustainability in the context of fast-moving consumer goods and services sectors in Pakistan. Acquisti and Spiekermann (2011) aimed to investigate the impact of interruptive advertising on consumers' willingness to pay for products bearing the advertiser's brand. By using a controlled experiment it was found that the ads significantly lowered the willingness to pay or goods associated with the advertising brand. It is important for practitioners to be aware of the negative consequences of this type of advertising as it can result in a negative attitude towards the brand.

3.5. Impact of social media marketing

Some scholars were focusing on the impact of social media marketing (Corduan (2017). The study by Yazdanparast et al (2016) found that brand-based SMM is important in impacting consumers' attitudes towards brands. It was found that attitude toward SMM of brands positively associated with perceived quality of the brand, perceived value for the cost of the brand, perceived uniqueness of the brand and willingness to pay a price premium aim for the brand.

Consumers might consider advertising on social media as intrusive and violating their personal life. Thus, new forms of advertising are introduced. Bóveda-Lambie and Hair (2012) focused on invertising - forms of non-intrusive marketing that consumers invite into their lives and how it can influence the consumer-brand relationship, through the results of self-brand connections. By conducting surveys it was found that consumers view social media invertising more favorably and less intrusive than social media advertising. However, the study did not find a support that consumer invertising interactions with brands develop stronger self-brand connections than when they don't interact with the brand in social media.

3.6. Impact of Mobile advertising

The next group of studies investigated the impact of mobile advertising (Enwereuzor, 2017; Sinkovics et al., 2012). Enwereuzor (2017) examined consumers' experience of

unsolicited mobile advertising in the context of Nigeria. The results obtained from 12 semi-structured interviews revealed that consumers experience negative feelings when they get such advertisements. These negative feelings center on annoyance and irritation, disturbance, lack of interest due to loss of money after receiving such calls, suspicion of fraudulent activities, and disappointment.

Sinkovics et al. (2012) investigated factors influencing the perception of mobile advertisement in two countries, Japan and Australia. By using the data collected from surveys, it was found that infotainment and credibility are key factors influencing advertising value for both, Australian and Japanese consumers. However, it was found that Japanese consumers are more irritated by mobile advertising in comparison with Australian consumers. For both countries, it was found that advertising value positively affects attitude towards advertising.

3.7. Adoption and use of new technologies by companies

Some studies focused on the adoption and use of new technologies by companies (Rogers and Clark, 2016). For example, Rogers and Clark (2016) proposed a conceptual model for context-aware B2B sales-CABS. Context-aware B2B selling is defined as “the integration of information about the customer’s situation with business intelligence to enable meaningful recommendations and communications throughout the sales process” (p.6). This application of technology can help to facilitate co-creation value between seller and buyer by providing access to timely and relevant information about operational needs. It can help to link the supplier sales activity to the customer buying cycle.

3.8. Consumer empowerment

Some scholars focused on consumer empowerment (Buehler and Maas, 2018; Malthouse and Shankar, 2009). Malthouse and Shankar (2009) state that consumers got the power to be protected from unwanted marketing communication by using spam filters, digital video records, caller id, and do-not-call/mail lists.

Buehler and Maas (2018) investigated consumer empowerment in the relationship between consumers and service providers. By using the self-efficacy theory the study explained the impact of consumer empowerment on perceived performance risk in insurance decision making. The study used survey data from 487 consumers in Switzerland who recently decided on an insurance service. By using SEM for data analysis, it was found that consumer empowerment consists of perceived self-efficacy and perceived controllability. Both showed a significant impact on perceived performance risk. It was also found that customers’ involvement in the purchase process moderates the effect of self-efficacy on perceived performance risk. Based on the result of this study companies could use consumer empowerment for risk reduction strategy. Consumers with self-efficacy and controllability beliefs perceived significantly less performance risk. Future research should investigate the long-term effect on consumer-perceived empowerment on the customer journey.

3.9. Complain handling

Another group of studies focused on the way how companies handle companies from consumers (Tarnovskaya and Biedenbach, 2018). For example, the study by Tarnovskaya and Biedenbach (2018) aims to explore brand meaning negotiation between different groups of stakeholders in the case of corporate rebranding failure. The study particularly focuses on the dynamic process of brand meaning creation by multiple stakeholders during corporate rebranding in the digital environment. The study analyses the case of Gap which rebranding lasted for only one week in 2010 and was reversed because of strong negative reactions by multiple stakeholders. By using a netnography the study found that the polarisation of brand meanings, in which both antagonistic and supportive forms co-exist, has a determinable impact on the outcome of corporate rebranding.

3.10 Co-creation

Co-creation is defined as customer participation in numerous stages of production and use processes via the use of operant resources (e.g. knowledge, skills, and effort). Co-creation has a number of benefits such as consumer engagement, an increase in sales, consumer satisfaction. However, co-creation creates challenges such as consumer interactivity and dealing with the implications of failed co-created products and services. The number of studies focused on co-creation (Sugathan et al., 2017; France et al., 2015). For example, the study by Sugathan et al (2017) aims to understand consumers' evaluation of failure, their subsequent attributions, their expectancy of success, and their willingness to co-create in the future. By employing two independent empirical studies the authors found that an increase in the degree of co-creation increases internal failure attribution and reduces firm failure attribution. Customers are no longer just passive purchasers of the brand but are active participants in creating brand experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000). France et al. (2015) developed a conceptual model for brand co-creation from a customer perspective. The proposed model shows that brand engagement, brand self-congruity and category involvement affect brand co-creation which in turn affects brand knowledge and brand value.

4 Limitations and directions for future research

Studies in the context of interactive marketing have the following limitations. First, the majority of studies focused on the benefits of new technologies for companies but did not look extensively on the challenges faced by companies adopting social media especially in the context of b2b companies. Future research can investigate the dark side of social media use on companies such as an excessive number of requests on social media, which can lead to the reduction of the responsiveness. Second, most of the studies use a cross-sectional approach to collect the data. Future research can use a longitudinal approach to advance understanding of the consequences of interactive marketing over time. Third, current studies were conducted in China (e.g. Alden et al.,

2016), USA (Yazdanparast et al., 2016), India (Sugathan et al., 2017). It is advised that future research is conducted in other countries as findings can be different due to the culture and social media adoption rate. Future studies should pay particular attention to other emerging markets (such as Russia, Brazil, and South Africa) as they suffer from the slow adoption rate of social media marketing. Some companies in these countries still rely more on traditional media for advertising their products and services, as they are more trusted in comparison with social media channels (Ali et al., 2016). Additionally, the majority of studies (e.g. Scarpi, 2010) use quantitative methods to collect the data. It is advised that future studies should use a mix of quantitative and qualitative research techniques to explore new consequences of interactive marketing and get new consumer insights. Finally, more research is needed on unanticipated consequences of the use of artificial intelligence in marketing on consumers and companies.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to provide a systematic review of the literature on the unanticipated consequences of interactive marketing for companies and consumers. As a result, this research synthesised the existing knowledge in the field and provided directions for future studies. Based on the literature review the unanticipated consequences can be divided into two groups: positive and negative. Positive unanticipated consequences include 1) Positive impact of online buzz on the value of IPO 2) Consumers became active participants in creating brand experience 3) Co-creation has a positive effect on brand knowledge and brand value 4) Celebrities can improve company's damaged reputation by using tweet messages. Negative consequences include: 1) Negative consequences of consumer endorsement (e.g. making marketing-generated content less effective) 2) Creation of antibranding images by consumers which could be seen by everyone 3) Interruptive advertising online has a negative effect on consumers' willingness to pay for products bearing in the advertisement 4) Unsolicited mobile advertising leads to negative feelings.

This study has a number of limitations. First, only publications from the Scopus database were included in the literature analysis and synthesis. Second, this research did not use weight analysis and meta-analysis. In order to provide a broader picture of the research and reconcile the conflicting findings of the existing studies, it is recommended that future research should contact these 2 types of analyses. It will advance knowledge in the interactive marketing domain.

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